

REMARKS

Applicant and the undersigned thank Examiner Bomar for his careful review of this application. Reconsideration of the present application in light of the above-amendments to the claims and in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

By the present communication, claims 13-14 and 19-20 have been amended, claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-12, 18, 22, 26-27, 45 and 57-69 stand cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 2, 6, 8, 15-17, 21, 23-25, 28-44, 46-56 have been presented in their original or previously presented form. Thus, claims 2, 6, 8, 13-17, 19-21, 23-25, 28-45 and 46-56 are pending and under active prosecution. Allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants and the undersigned gratefully acknowledge that claims 2, 6, 8, 16, 17, 23-25, 28-44 and 46-56 have been indicated as allowable.

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claims 13-14 and 19-20 were objected to as depending from a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form. In response, claims 13-14 and 19-20 have been amended herein. The amendments are supported by the specification and claims, as filed, as the elements of claim 4 have been incorporated into each of the above noted amended claims. Allowance is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC §102(b) and 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 4, 12, 45, 66, 68 and 69 stand rejected under 35 USC §102 (b) as allegedly being anticipated by Nobileau (U.S. Patent No. 5,337,823). Claim 67 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Nobileau. In view of the cancellation of these claims, the rejections are moot. Withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete Response to the Final Office Action mailed May 3, 2007. Applicant has made a diligent effort to advance the prosecution of the application by submitting claim amendments and arguments in support of the patentability of claims 2, 6, 8, 13-17, 19-21, 23-25, 28-45 and 46-56. Applicant has not acquiesced to any rejection and reserves the right to address the patentability of any additional claim features in the future.

In view of the above, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of claims 2, 6, 8, 13-17, 19-21, 23-25, 28-45 and 46-56 is respectfully requested.

As the three-month statutory period for reply expires on August 3, 2007, this Response is therefore considered timely filed and no fees are believed to be due. However, should the Commissioner deem any fees as being due, including any fees for any extensions of time, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to debit said fees from, or to credit any overpayments to, USPTO Deposit Account Number 50-3786, Reference No. 14147.105007.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned via telephone at the number listed below if a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael F. Hay
Registration Number 54,155

Date: July 3, 2007
King & Spalding LLP
1100 Louisiana Street, Ste. 4000
Houston, TX 77002-5213
Telephone: 713.276.7400
Facsimile: 713.751.3290
E-mail: mhay@kslaw.com
USPTO ID 59081